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POLICY PLANNING STAFF

TO ESTABLISH U.S. POLICY REGARDING ANTI-COMMUNIST MEASURES WHICH COULD BE PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

March 22, 1948

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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1.1-26 March 22, 1948

PROBLEM: To establish U.S. policy regarding anti-Communist measures which could be planned and carried out within the Inter-American System

DISCUSSION:

1. The question of Communism will be considered at the Ninth International Conference of American States which will meet at Bogotá on March 30, 1948. Proposals similar to Resolution VI adopted at the second meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics at Havana, Cuba, July 1940, probably will be made. The Havana Resolution provides that: "Each one of the Governments of the American Republics shall adopt within its territory all necessary measures in accordance with its constitutional powers to prevent and suppress any activities directed, assisted, or abetted by foreign governments, or foreign groups or individuals, which tend to subvert the domestic institutions, or to foment disorder in their internal political life, or to modify by pressure, propaganda, threats, or in any other manner, the free and sovereign right of their peoples to be governed by their existing domestic systems". This resolution also provides that the respective governments agree that they will immediately consult together, if the State directly interested wishes to request it, in the event that the peace of any of the American Republics is menaced by such activities.

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2. In calling attention to these facts the Bogotá Review Group in the Department expressed concern that some of the measures proposed at the Bogotá Conference by other American Republics might be so drastic in nature that they would, if accepted by the United States, increase international tension, give dictatorial governments in other countries a means of attacking all opposition, and might even infringe constitutional liberties in the United States.

3. The subject of anti-Communist agreements among the American Republics was raised with the Department by the Argentine Government during August 1947. The Argentine Foreign Minister emphasized the desirability of anti-Communist agreements to which the United States would be a party, but then inconsistently observed: "Argentina does feel, however, that the United States should change in some ways its extreme opposed position vis-à-vis Russia". Nothing came of the Argentine suggestion regarding anti-Communist agreements; but the Argentine Government probably will pursue the question further at the Bogotá Conference.

4. During the latter part of 1947, the Dominican Government suggested to the Haitian Government the negotiation of an anti-Communist agreement. The Haitian Government replied that the other American Republics should be included in such important agreements, and that the Dominican Government might wish to take the initiative regarding multilateral agreements among the American Republics. The Dominican Government followed the Haitian

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suggestion, but the proposal met with slight response from the other American Governments. The Department sent the following telegraphic instruction to American diplomatic officers in the other American Republics under date of December 17, 1947:

> In the event you should be consulted with respect to the views of this Government concerning possible multilateral inter-American action for defense against Communist penetration--as a result of such initiatives as the recent suggestion made by the Dominican Government to the Haitian Government--you may indicate that the United States Government believes that this problem, the seriousness of which is recognized, can best be dealt with at present by each country in accordance with the varied situations from country to country. The United States Government recognizes, of course, that as circumstances may change in this respect there may eventually be occasion for modifying this view.

The accelerated activities of international Communism indicate that the time may have come, as foreseen in the last sentence of the December 17 instruction, for a careful and thorough review of the position of the United States Government respecting means to combat Communism.

5. The consensus of several officers of the Department who were consulted during the preparation of this paper is that Communism in the Americas is a potential danger, but that, with a few possible exceptions, it is not seriously dangerous at the present time.

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According to CIA Report No. 4367 of September 16, 1947, entitled "Communist strength in the other American Republics", the "best figures" estimate of Communist Party membership in the twenty Latin American countries is approximately 360,000. This would be about one-quarter of one percent of the population of those countries.

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It should be pointed out, however, that these assessments of Communist capabilities may require revision if Communist domination spreads further in Europe, particularly to Italy and France. There are large colonies of Italian immigrants in several of the American Republics in which the Communists may succeed in gaining increased influence which might constitute an important accretion to Communist strength. The influence of French culture and ideas always has been strong in the American Republics, and every effort would be made through a Communist-dominated France to make full use of this advantage.

6. A draft paper regarding U.S. policy toward the other American Republics was prepared in the Department during the latter part of 1946. The following points made in this policy paper have a bearing on the problem of Communism:

(a) A common belief in Republican institutions has been, and must continue to be, one of the fundamental bases of inter-American solidarity;

(b) It is the policy of the United States to support in every proper way the forces which make for progress toward representative government based on constitutional procedures and respect for civil liberties and human rights;

(c) Two new forces threatening democracy have, during and since the war, made their appearance in Latin America: a brand of Fascism deriving in part from Nazi ideology, and, second, Communism;

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(d) The Government of the United States considered it undesirable at that time to initiate any general attack against local Communist movements or their sources of inspiration, but recognized that it might be compelled to act in the event that Communist activities should appear to be endangering inter-American solidarity or security;

(e) The policy of the United States was to stand upon the inter-American principle of non-intervention, but without derogation from the right of the community of States to concern itself with any matter bearing upon it. peace and welfare--a right which is inherent in the inter-American principle of consultation and in the Charter of the United Nations.

7. Several conditions which play into the hands of the Communists exist in many of the American Republics. There is poverty that is so widespread that it means a bare subsistence level for large masses of people. There are ignorance and a high degree of illiteracy. There are strong reactionary forces which, through extreme selfishness and lack of any sense of social responsibility, impose a minority will through military or other dictatorial governments and so alienate large segments of their populations which otherwise probably would be anti-Communist. Taking advantage of these conditions to acquire power which will serve Communist ends, the most effective and well organized force at the disposal of the Communists in certain countries is the CTAL (Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina), led by the Mexican crypto-Communist, Vicente Lombardo Toledano. The principal

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strength of the CTAL is in Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay and Costa Rica.

8. There also are strong anti-Communist forces at work in Latin America. The Catholic Church, the armed forces, and the large landowners naturally provide strong opposition to Communism. These three elements frequently work together and dominate governments. Unfortunately, they sometimes come close to the extreme of reaction which is very similar to Communism as concerns totalitarian police state methods. More hopeful developments in the effort to combat Communism depend in part upon an increasingly rapid growth of middle classes, plans for the more effective organization of anti-Communist labor, and more effective action by liberal and Socialist elements which, while frequently of the left, are anti-Communist in ideology and in method. The Inter-American Confederation of Labor, with the active support of the A.F. of L., is a new and promising force which is challenging the position of the CTAL and has already made important progress, particularly in Chile.

9. Ample precedent for common measures to combat Communism in the Americas exists in the programs and activities carried out during the last World War. Many resolutions adopted in inter-american conferences express the determination to oppose totalitarian and subversive activities which seek to destroy the democratic system of the American Republics. Specific action was taken through the work of the Emergency Advisory Committee for Political Defense with headquarters at Montevideo through the exchange of information among the

American Governments; through programs of police cooperation; and through a coordination of effort in the control of travel, communications, and the issuance of passports and visas.

Any program of cooperation among the American Republics to combat Communism will require some means of coordination among the American Republics, and arrangements within the Department of State to provide a responsible center for coordination of action to be taken by the several departments and agencies of our Government which will be concerned with the problem.

10. It is stated in the comment by the Bogotá Review Group that there are dangers for the United States inherent in possible bilateral or multilateral anti-Communist agreements among the American Republics. There is a probability that, due to uneven progress toward democracy in the other American Republics, there would be many cases in which such anti-Communist agreements would be directed against all political opposition, Communist or otherwise, by dictatorial governments, with the inevitable result of driving leftist elements into the hands of the Communist organization.

CONCLUSIONS:

11. The policy of the United States regarding common measures to combat Communism, which could be planned and carried out within the inter-American System, should be governed by the following considerations:

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(a) International Communism at the present time must be regarded as the tool of the Kremlin, which the latter utilizes to advance Russian imperialistic designs and to supplant democracy throughout the world with a totalitarian police state system that suppresses human rights and civil liberties;

(b) International Communism, consequently, is a direct and major threat to the national security of the United States, and to that of all of the other American Republics;

(c) This threat, at the present time, is a potential rather than an immediately serious one in Latin America generally, but preventive measures should be taken to minimize it before it becomes more dangerous;

(d) The national security of the United States must be the determining factor in any decisions taken, and this requires the most careful estimate of the possible consequences of measures designed to combat international Communism in the Americas;

(e) It is extremely important, always with our own national security in mind, to concentrate upon the defeat of international Communism. As a corollary, it is essential to follow policies and to adopt measures calculated not only to command the very valuable support of anti-Communist labor, liberal and Socialist elements, but also to

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persuade sufferers from reactionary forces in the American Republics that the United States is a better and more promising hope than Communism or the Soviet Union.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

12. The United States should not enter into anti-Communist agreements with the other American Republics, and should oppose a multilateral inter-American anti-Communist agreement, until further study has been given to the problem.

However, the Delegation of the United States should propose an anti-Communist resolution. The resolution should refer to recent developments in some countries outside of the Americas which illustrate the aggressive action of Communist minorities. It should refer to inter-American resolutions condemning totalitarianism. The United States resolution should express strong condemnation of international Communism as an example of the totalitarian police state system that suppresses all human rights and civil liberties. The resolution also should state in positive terms the support of the subscribing governments for human rights and civil liberties and for social and economic policies designed to raise the standard of living of the peoples and accord economic security.

13. An immediate study should be made by ARA, EUR, and S/P to determine if the national interests would be served by resolute leadership on the part of the United States in an effort to have all Communist parties in the Western Hemisphere declared illegal by the various

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(d) give information and guidance to American Ambassadors to the other American Republics regarding international Communism and the means to combat it.

15. The movement for the organization of non-Communist labor, including Catholic labor unions, in the other American Republics should be encouraged. In particular, support should be given by every practicable means to the Inter-American Confederation of Labor.

Well qualified Labor Attachés should be assigned to our Embassies in key countries among the American Republics where Communist activities are an important problem or where labor organization is a significant factor.

16.

17. The Department of State should take whatever action may be possible to refuse passports to known Communists who are citizens of the United States and who wish to go to any of the other American Republics. (It is understood that this matter now is before the Under Secretary for consideration.)

18. ARA, in cooperation with other interested offices, should continue to give urgent attention to specific plans for assisting in the economic development of the other American Republics. Such plans should be

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consistent with other obligations of the United States and should be subject to higher priorities in other parts of the world; and should be based on the principle of helping the other American Republics to help themselves.

Since effective economic and social cooperation is a major weapon to combat Communist influence, cooperative inter-American programs such as those relating to public health and sanitation, agriculture, food production, etc. should be continued.

19. The Department of State should continue to utilize and to improve those activities in its Information and Cultural Program in Latin America that would help to combat Communism. The recommendations contained in the statement of "U.S. information policy with regard to anti-American propaganda", dated December 1, 1947, should be carried out vigorously and fully.

American libraries and cooperative cultural institutes should not become involved in internal political affairs in the other American Republics. Their influence will be anti-Communist if they carry out their normal functions efficiently. Radio, press, and motion picture programs should be reviewed to determine their effectiveness as measures to combat Communism.

20. A systematic and continuous effort should be made to inform United States business interests operating in the American Republics and, where possible, United States citizens residing or travelling there, about the problems and objectives of United States policy in combatting Communism in those countries, with a view to enlisting their cooperation.